United Nations E/2014/NGO/26

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 May 2014

Original: English

2014 session
Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda*
High-level segment: annual ministerial review

Statement submitted by International Federation for Home Economics, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

14-32635 (E) 160514

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Statement

From a home economics perspective, the most important challenge to reach the United Nations Millennium Development Goals is the focus on families and households, as they are the core units of all societies and economies. They play a decisive role for sustaining gains in the future.

Based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 16 (3): "The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State."

For more than 2,000 years, Governments and stakeholders in business, industry and economy have been setting the basic conditions for families, individuals and communities around the world.

Analysis of the current situation of marginalized families that suffer from poverty, hunger, lack of education, diseases, lack of access to finances and job opportunities, conflicts and disasters strongly suggests a focus on families and individuals as a strategy to eradicate poverty and meet the Millennium Development Goals.

In addition to prevailing conditions, including basic education, health-care systems and infrastructure for families and communities, home economics education is a major building block to enable families to overcome poverty, decrease inequalities and avoid diseases.

Empowerment in everyday life management leads to valuable results for development through educating and advising families and individuals in home economics issues, such as food production, maternal and family health, capacity-building, gender equality and earning an income and acquiring resources.

Only strong and educated families and family members with access to material, if not material resources, will have the power to care for their families, to participate in society, community and economic processes.

This year is the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. It focuses on exploring family-oriented policies and strategies aimed mainly at confronting family poverty, ensuring work-family balance and advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity. These challenges are strongly linked to the Millennium Development Goals.

Since 1994, the International Year of the Family has highlighted that the significance and well-being of families should be the focus of Governments and of stakeholders concerned with family policies.

The International Federation for Home Economics advocates for families and calls upon Governments and stakeholders in business, industry and the economy worldwide to take responsibility for improving the basic conditions for families, individuals and communities. The International Federation for Home Economics demands that development strategies and measures focus on individuals and families as the core units of the society and the economy, to empower them to improve their quality of life and achieve well-being. In the current political, social, cultural and economic conditions, educating and advising individuals and families in the management of their resources and improvement of their everyday life are key to sustainable development and meeting the Millennium Development Goals.